

FOOD for POETS,

A

POEM.

FICTA VOLUPTATIS CAUSA SINT PROXIMA VERIS.

HOR. Art. Poet. v. 338.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR ; and sold by F. NEWBERRY, the Corner of
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[Price ONE SHILLING.]

FOOD for FORTS

P O E M.

THE VOLUNTARY CIVIL SERVICE
FOR THE FORTS

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Printed by the Author, and sold by T. Newbery, the printer,
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[THE ONE SHILLING.]

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DEDICATION.

To * * * * *

MADAM, accept, tho' I'm forbid to use
Your Name rever'd, this Tribute from the Muse.
Perhaps strict Judgment might exclaim, forbear
Till thou canst sing what's fit for her to hear ;
Yet, like a Child of some new Plaything glad,
I ran with Joy and gave the best I had.
But if, in happier Hour, the Gods inspire
My lukewarm Bosom with a bolder Fire,
Your Picture, Madam, I'll presume to draw,
And strike the giddy Female World with Awe.
What tho' no Titles lengthen-out your Name,
Tho' yet unnotic'd in the Rolls of Fame,
Good Sense, and Virtue always will excel,
And bear the Prize from every thoughtless Belle.



P R E F A C E, by the Editor.

IT is wonderful so much Time and Ink have been spent, in reducing to a System the feeding of Running-Horses, and Game Cocks, while our Poets, who make a great Part in all publick Festivity, have been entirely neglected; yet I must say, in behalf of the present Age, it is not owing to Parsimony or any particular Oeconomy; for when were Men more liberal of their Purfes, than they are in these Days? Have not many, and those of the highest Rank, been reduced to the last Shilling, by supporting the Family of the Turf, and Cock-Pit? Nay, so emulous are our very Mechanicks, that it is no uncommon Thing to see them venture more, at one of these *innocent Amusements*, than they can hope honestly to gain in a Twelvemonth; therefore, we must trace this Neglect to some other Source.

Poverty and Poetry have been inseparable Companions from the earliest Ages, and those who have encouraged that divine Art, have wisely and carefully avoided enriching the Man, lest they should spoil the Poet. Again, it is a Maxim of great Antiquity, that no Production can be good till it hath stood the Test of an hundred Years; then what Man of Sense would pretend to read a modern Poem? And here I must congratulate those, who, to avoid this Error, never read at all; who constitute a great Part of the fashionable World, and who may enraptured say with Horace,

Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.

Perhaps

Perhaps our Author, like many others, wrote his Poem merely for Amusement, till he found it grow into a regular System; but I wish he had given it some other Name, as I fear it is more likely to become Food for Critics, than for any of his distressed Brethren. But I am convinced, if the Reviewers will read him with their *usual Candour*, they will confess he hath deserved well from the Publick, and *seriously* recommend him to all who intend to court, or patronize the Muses. The Examples are well chosen and convincing, but it happens with Poets, as with Horses and Cocks, that all are not game, how regularly soever trained and fed; and the most generous Courser, for Want of Food and Exercise, may be reduced to a common Hack. As this is the Case, every Candidate for publick Fame ought to be carefully examined, before he is allowed to gather a single Flower from the Foot of Parnassus, which would save Abundance of Christian Paper and Ink; and perhaps our Sack, in former Days, would not have been thrown so wantonly away.

*Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,
Quæsitum est; Ego nec studium sine divitæ vena,
Nec rude quid profit video ingenium; alterius sic
Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amice.*

These Verses abundantly prove what I have just asserted; for *Nature*, however refined, cannot produce any Thing worthy of the publick Notice, without the Assistance of *Art*; or, in our Author's Words, *proper feeding*; and feeding a Man unformed by *Nature*, would be like scattering Seeds among Rocks and Briars.

Writings that betray a true poetic Spirit, how unpolished soever they are, extort from us Praise and Admiration; but those that are cold and lifeless, though formed upon the most scrupulous

scrupulous Observation of the Laws of Poetry, are neglected or condemned. Poetry is allowed, by the best Judges, to be a true Description of Nature, then how weakly must they argue, who rank descriptive Poetry amongst the meanest Productions of that Art, which has no existence but in Description? Virgil, in his Pastorals, has given a fine Picture of the Country where he lived, and wonders Men should fly those delightful Scenes, where Gods, and godlike Heroes had resided.

*Quem fugis, ab! Demens? habitarunt Dii quoque silvas,
Dardaniusque Paris.*

But this may be objected to by some, who will say, he speaks as a Shepherd perfectly resigned to that State Providence had placed him in; and then urge it, as a Proof against our Hypothesis, that his Writings were the Effect of Prejudice and Education, and not in Consequence of that Regimen which is prescribed by our Author. But this is a Mistake, which Virgil himself shall testify,

*Atque utinam è vobis unus, vestrique fuisset,
Aut custos gregis, aut maturæ vinitor uvæ.*

Which we shall thus paraphrase, had Heaven kindly made me free to tend my own Flocks, or dress my Vineyards, I should have been happy; these Pictures of rural Felicity would have been more open, and just; from my own Table I should have been properly *fed* for the Undertaking, and not dependent upon you, as I now am. Doctor Trapp was clearly of our Author's Opinion, when speaking of Homer, and Virgil, comparatively, he says, "It is a great Error to think that all Fire consists in quarrelling, and fighting, as do three Parts in four of Homer's, in his Iliad. The Fire we are speaking of is Spirit and Vivacity—Not that Virgil is deficient in that Sort
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of Fire, the *fierce*, the *rapid*, the *fighting*." Now what is this less than saying, that Virgil, though cooler in his Liquor, yet, occasionally, when he had drank deeply, could fiercely beat the Rounds, rapidly run over a Waiter, and knock down, or kill a Watchman, in neither Instance inferior to Homer himself? Mr. Pope's Sentiments are somewhat different, but exactly to our Purpose; "This Fire, says he, is discerned in Virgil as through a Glass, every where equal and constant: In Lucan, and Statius, it bursts out in sudden, short, and interrupted Flashes: In Milton it glows like a Furnace, kept to an uncommon Heat by Art: In Shakespear it strikes before we are aware, like an accidental Fire from Heaven: But in Homer, and in him only, it burns every where clearly, and every where irresistibly." Though these two great Men cannot agree which of their Authors was most testy in his Liquor, yet, hence it is clear, they both thought it necessary for an Epic Writer to be often heated with generous Wine; otherwise the *Fire* of his Imagination would damp, and discharge itself in a cloudy Vapour. Perhaps the metaphorical Manner, in which these Doctrines have been delivered, hath long concealed their true Meaning; but that we have found it is plain, from Pope himself, who is his best Commentator,

Drink deep or taste not the Pierian Spring.

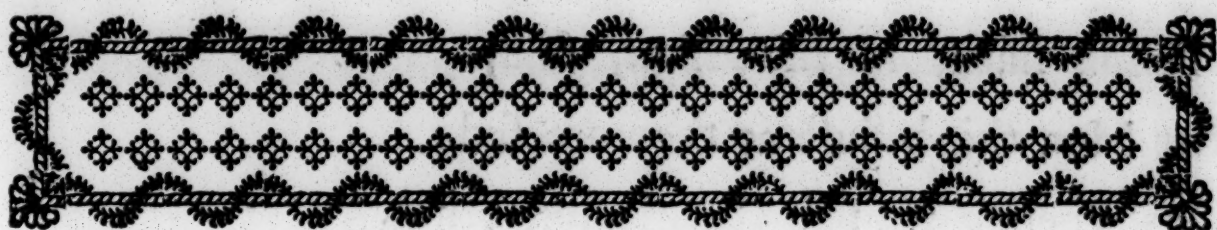
Which is saying, if you are by Nature formed a Poet, and would willingly arrive at the highest Perfection in your Art, by writing an Epic Poem, drink freely; otherwise refrain from Wines, and you may walk safely in the inferior Paths of Poetry. Every Man of Reading will see I have treated him *candidly*, and, without scruple, give into my Arguments, which are founded on the strongest Basis, and supported by
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the best Authority ; free from those mean Subterfuges, and splitting of Texts, practised by the modern Sectaries, which must be held in the utmost Contempt, by every one whose Breast is in the least enriched with Science. I shall not defend, or explain any Part of this little Poem, but advise all Patrons and Poets, never to put it out of their Hands,

Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.

I have a Reason for urging it strongly, which is this, I fear our poor Bard is nearly reduced to a satirical Diet, which he abhors, and would willingly avoid, and for the publick Good I sincerely wish he may ; for though *Gaming* in itself is perfectly innocent, and lawful, it must shock every humane Breast to see it turned to Ridicule ; and, certain it is, the best of Things may be made ridiculous, in the Hands of a prophane Wit. Our Author himself assured me his next Essay, if he was reduced to a proper Regimen, should be on that Subject. I have often earnestly persuaded him against it, by urging the Improbability of Success, when not only the Fashion of the Age, but the Practice of the greatest Men in it, were against him ; nay, I once ventured to mention his own Inability, but he scoffingly replied, in the Words of Juvenal,

—— *Stulta est clementia, cum tot ubique
Vatibus occurras, perituræ parcere chartæ.*



FOOD *for* POETS, &c.

MADAM! permit an humble Swain
To greet you, with a rustic Strain,
First sung near that meand'ring * Stream,
Where hungry Poets often dream
Of Phœbus, and the tuneful Nine,
Then wake, and study——where to dine.
For they 're forbid, by Laws of old,
Or Land, or Tenement to hold;
Or to provide or Wine, or Meat,
Or know with whom they next shall eat:
And few, the Truth must be confess'd,
This antient Statute have transgress'd.

* The River ISIS.

PRIOR hath, in his *Alma*, said,
 That Men think just as they are fed :
 From whence we this Conclusion bring,
 As Poets feed, they always sing,
 In ev'ry diff'rent Kind of Poem :
 Thus far premis'd, by Way of Proem,
 Methodically we go on,
 As TRAPP, and many more have done.

And first for EPIGRAM; they tell ye,
 You should not over-fill his Belly;
 A constant vegetable Diet
 Will keep the inward Foe at quiet,
 With now and then some bottled Ale,
 It matters not if mild or stale,
 'Tis certainly a Liquor fit
 For that pert Kind of sparkling Wit.

Deny him then the usual Potion,
 Which gave the Epigram its Motion,
 To ELEGY his Muse is turn'd ;
 A Mistress, or a Pudding mourn'd
 Fills up the Tear-bedighted Line ;
 He laugh'd, alas ! but now must pine.

Next

Next to the Groves and Meadows take him,
 Where *Dolly* oft may Cheesecakes bake him,
 And stuff him well with Curds and Cream,
 To PASTORAL he turns his Theme;
 Admires the Dew-bespangled Morn,
 And chirping Birds on ev'ry Thorn;
 The pretty little bleating Lambs,
 Which frisk about their tender Dams;
 And lowing Herds, which, from her Cave,
 Call ECHO forth to hear them rave.

Now make his Diet somewhat higher,
 And seat him by the Farmer's Fire,
 With a large country Audience round,
 In Theme DIDACTIC he'll abound;
 Prove NORTH, or CHATHAM, either knew more,
 As he is in or out of Humour.

Fame thus acquir'd, he doth regale
 With Beef, or Pork, and humming Ale;
 Which tunes his Soul to ODE or SONNET,
 And scarce a Nymph, who wears a Bonnet,
 To the whole Village doth belong,
 But is immortaliz'd in Song.

Poor *Pegasus*! * how hard thy Fate!
 Just like an *Oxford Hackney* beat.
 Not so when *Perfius* first bestrode thee;
 Nor when the furious *Pindar* rode thee;
 Then few, but few, with double Rein,
 Could guide thee o'er the verdant Plain.

Now let us turn from Song to S A T I R E,
 For Poets are not all Good-nature,
 But first the Regimen——With Bread
 Once ev'ry Day let him be fed,
 And Water, *quantum sufficit*
 Which he from *Helicon*† must get;
 He'll then discern what Mischief's brewing,
 And point you out a Nation's Ruin;
 Spend all his Ink, and Gall, and Blood,
 To do an injur'd Country good.

For C O M E D Y, *Swift's* our Example,
 Who, all must own, is full and ample;

* A winged Horse, which sprang from the Blood that was spilt in cutting off the Head of *Medusa*; first rode by *Perfius*, the Son of *Jupiter* and *Danae*.

† A Mountain in *Bæotia*, over which *Pegasus* flew; and chancing to strike his Hoof against it, caused the *Fons Caballinus*, or *Horse Fountain*.

Though for the Stage he never wrote,
 His Journals cannot be forgot.
 Read *Draper's* Letters o'er again,
 You'll say he knew both Books and Men;
 But *Gulliver* would prove alone
 He made the Comic Muse his own,
 And had in Law and Verse a Knack more,
 Than most who study *Coke* or *Blackmore*,
 Sometimes the *Dean* was found in Garret,
 And sometimes lolling in a Chariot:
 Now sleeps where Lodging's for a Penny,
 And eats, and drinks, and laughs with any.
 Which proves, a heterogeneous Matter
 Agrees with Mifs * *Thalia's* Nature.

But if for TRAGEDY you feed,
 Be careful; never let him bleed;
 But drink before he goes to rest,
 For a full Habit's always best;
 You dread a Fever, which we want,
 For when delirious he will rant,
 Smit with the Love of sacred Lay, †
 And rave, and write the live-long Day.

* The Comic Muse.

† Smit with the Love of sacred Song.—PAR. Lost. b. 3. ver, 29.

Cool *Addison* made Master *Gato*
 Lay by his Glafs to ftudy *Plato*;
 And then to please the *Gall'ry Folks*,
 Who all are fond of Deaths and Jokes,
 Throw the Philofopher afide,
 And play the *sniv'ling Suicide*.

But fee the contrary Extream,
 This mov'd by Fire, and that by Phlegm;
 Young *Hamlet*, though opprefs'd with Sorrow,
 Put off the Evil till To-morrow;
 And nobly prov'd, we ought to bear
 The Load intrufted to our Care.

Homer, of Bards the bravest Fellow,
 Ne'er touch'd a String till he was mellow,
 Then, fir'd with *Port*, or good *Champaign*,
 Each Thought came fmoaking from his Brain.
 But ftop, —— I think the Critics fay,
 Thofe Wines were not in *Homer's* Day.
 Now, this Objection to remove,
 We'll prove the very Fact on *Jove*;
 For he 'twas planted ev'ry Vine,
 And taught the Gods the Ufe of Wine.

Though

Though we digress a while to shew it,
You must confess you drove me to it.

The specious Tale, so often told,
Devis'd by cunning Bards of old,
If taken literally, in one Sense,
Is little more or less than Nonsense.
Could *Jupiter* be such a Blade,
First, to seduce a harmless Maid,
Then, when obtain'd his base Desire,
To set the Lady's House on Fire?
Some say, indeed, that § *Juno*, jealous,
Slily betray'd this King of Fellows;
And that he, from the Mother dying,
Sav'd a poor *Embryo-God* from frying;
Who, in his Father's ‡ thigh concealed,
Was at a proper Time revealed.

§ Rogat illa Jovem sine nomine munus.
Cui Deus, Elige, ait, nullam patiére repulsam:
Quoque magis credas, Stygii quoque conscia funto
Numina torrentis timor, et deus ille deorum est.
Læta malo, nimiumque petens, perituraque amantis
Obsequio, Semele: Qualem Saturnia, dixit,
Te solet amplecti; Veneris cum foedus initis,
Da mihi te talem.

‡ — — — — Genetricis ab alvo.
Eripitur, patrioque tener (si credere dignum est)
Insuitur femori, maternaque tempora complet.

But,

But, strip'd of this poetic Madness,
 Let's hear the Tale in sober Sadness. —
 To cleanse the Ground, ere Vines were laid,
Jove us'd his *Thigh* to drive the Spade,
 For then no Labourers were known,
 The Gods perform'd their Work alone;
 Unlike the Great, who now, for Hire,
 Get Men to run through Dirt and Mire,
 For *Lawn*, or ‡ *Ribbands*, leap o'er Sticks,
 And play a thousand Monkey Tricks;
 But they, above such mean Rewards,
 Sought Honour only from their Bards;
 Who, as *Jove* planted first the Vine,
 Did feign his Son the God of Wine.
 Now all confess, in Vegetation
Sol hath a very near Relation,
 Therefore no Study we require,
 To prove our *Bacchus* born in Fire.

Next, let us hear the Tale of *Pallas*,
 She, 'tis agreed, came forth a tall Lass,

‡ For a Description of these, which are an Imitation of the *Olympic*
 Games, see the Voyage to *Lilliput*.

§ — — — Corpus mortale tumultus
 Non tulit æthereos, donisque jugalibus arsit.

Arm'd cap-a-pe, from *Jove's** own Head,
 Who was by *Vulcan* brought to Bed.
 The Case was this: *Jove* loved his Glass,
 And seldom let an Evening pass
 Without some witty Blades at Hand,
 Who drank, as long they could stand;
 One Night, when they were quite top-ful,
Vulcan made, what we call a *Bull*,
 On which some sprightly Things were said
 By *Jove*, who thus was brought to Bed.
 These answered, make Objections no more,
 And we again will speak of Homer.

What Madness must possess their Brains,
 Who fancied his exalted Strains
 Were by an old blind Beggar chanted?
 'Tis plain that Commonsense they wanted,
 When nothing but the best of Feeding
 Could have produced such Depth of Reading.

Virgil, the next upon Report,
 Lived in the Sunshine of a Court;

* ——— De capitis fertur sine matre paterni
 Vertice cum clypeo profuuisse suo.

Who, ere *Augustus* brought him thither,
 Did little but observe the Weather,
 And teach good Wives to mind their Bees,
 And Gard'ners when to prune their Trees.
 But when old Rome he got a Seat in,
 And learn'd the Art of princely eating,
 We find his Muse and him aspire;
 Both warm'd at a true EPIC FIRE.

When *Ovid* was expell'd the Borough,
 Nothing was heard but Songs of Sorrow;
 Tho' no one at his Master's Table,
 To sing more sweet than he was able.

Madam, if yet you would have more
 Examples, we could give a Score;
 But, *Matthew** says, if aptly chosen,
 Four are as valid as four Dozen.
 Perhaps you now require to know
 What makes this Kind of Verses flow;
 And bid me, who the Precepts give,
 Declare to you how well I live.

* Prior.

Directed by my wayward Fate,
 I often think, and——sometimes eat ;
 Sometimes I drink strong Beer, and Wine,
 Thanks to the *Publick*, and the *Nine*;
 Let *Envy* clink her selfwrought Chain,
 And *Dulness* view my *State* with Pain ;
 Unletter'd *Greatness* idly stare
 On me, like Children at a Bear ;
 I mock the supercilious Crowd,
 Despise the Covetous and Proud ;
 Hold ev'ry Partizan at Distance,
 And wish the poor distress'd Assistance.
 Happy, with the discerning few,
 I honour all with Hearts like you.

T H E E N D.

Directed by my spiritual Law,
I often think, and—sometimes cry;
Somewhere I think young Peter, and Winnie,
Back to the Father and the Mother;
Let them be like the Father and the Son,
And I will give my love with them;
I want to be like them,
O that I could be like them;
I want the Father and the Son,
But I am not like them;
I want to be like them,
But I am not like them;
And with the love of Father and Son,
I want to be like them;
I want to be like them,
I want to be like them.

P. H. A. E. H. D.

